

eminent were so perfectly contrived that the will of the majority could always be obtained fairly and without impediment. But this is true of no form. The people cannot assemble themselves; their representation is unequal and vicious. Various checks are opposed to every legislative proposition. Factions get possession of the public councils. Bribery corrupts them. Personal interests lead them astray from the general interests of their constituents; and other impediments arise so as to prove to every practical man that a law of limited duration is much more manageable than one which needs a repeal. (Written to James Madison from Paris, 1789. F. V., ui.)

CONSTITUTIONS,—However, it is still certain that the written Constitutions may be violated in moments of passion or delusion, yet they furnish a text to which those who are watchful may again rally and recall the people; they fix too for the people the principles of their political creed, (To Joseph Priestly, 1802, F. VIII., 159.)

CONSULS.—The law of nations does not of itself extend to consuls at all. They are not of the diplomatic class of characters, to which alone that law extends of right. Convention indeed may give it to them, and sometimes has done so; but in that case the convention can be produced. In ours with France, it is expressly declared that consuls shall have the privilege of that law, and we have no convention with any other nation. * * * Independent of law, consuls are to be considered as distinguished foreigners, dignified by a commission from their sovereign and especially recommended by him to the respect of the nations with whom they reside. They are subject to the laws of the land, indeed, precisely as other foreigners are, a convention where there is one making¹ part of the law of the land; but if at any time, their conduct should render it necessary to arrest the authority of the laws over them, the rigor of those laws should be tempered by our respect for their sovereign as far as the case will admit. This moderate and respectful treatment towards foreign consuls, it is my duty to recommend and press on our citizens, because I ask it for their